14: Brant E-5 (1949-50) 1954 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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Garden cultivation is quite simple. Hand tools, such as steel mattocks, rakes and hoes, which are obtained from Rangoon, are employed to prepare the soil. Cattle or water buffalo excrement is mixed with water to a thin consistency and poured from bamboo-spouted metal buckets over the ground. (The use of human excrement as a fertilizer, common in China and Japan, is not practiced in Burma.) During the monsoon season there is, of course, no problem of irrigation, but during the hot and dry seasons the gardens must be watered frequently. This task is often performed by young boys, who draw water from the wells and apply it to the gardens. The work of picking the matured crops and preparing them for transport to market is commonly done by female members of the household.

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2. Paddy Cultivation. The principal occupation of forty-three persons is cultivation of paddy. This category is here defined to include individuals who own or rent land on which they cultivate paddy, as distinct from persons who work on a wage basis in the paddy cultivation of others. The latter are referred to in this report as field laborers.

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Of the thirty-four paddy land holdings on which we have data, twenty-nine are rented and five are owned by the cultivators. All but one of these holdings is under twenty acres. This high ratio of renters to owners, as well as the small number of paddy cultivators relative to the total number of gainfully occupied villagers, is reflective of long-run trends in agriculture in this general area. Rural tenancy has been the outcome, in Lower Burma, of a long period of loss of land ownership to moneylenders, largely absentee, through inability of the cultivators to repay loans taken out at very high rates of interest. As tenancy has grown apace, individual cultivators have become discouraged with their small return for hard work. Accordingly, many have given up paddy cultivation altogether in favor of less arduous and relatively more rewarding occupations. However, this trend may be reversed, for there began in early 1951 actual implementation of the Land Nationalization Act of 1948, which provides for distribution of agricultural land to the cultivators on an individual ownership basis.

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For the great majority of the paddy cultivators of Tadagale it is possible to eke out little more than subsistence from season to season. A few, after paying their hired labor, putting aside seed for the next year's planting, and filling the granary for home use, can realize some cash income by the sale of a small surplus of paddy. If the cultivator with a little surplus can possibly afford it, he holds the paddy until the hot season, when the market price is highest.

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The average yield per acre in Tadagale, based on data for thirty cultivators for the harvest season 1948-49, is 19.8 bushels of paddy. This compares closely with the overall average figures for Burma. According to the Yearbook of Food and Agriculture for 1949 (U.N.-F.A.O.) the average yield per acre in Burma was 20 bushels.

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In late March, the paddy fields of Tadagale are burned over, depositing an ash from any stubble remaining from the previous harvest. Sometime after the New Year celebration (which begins about April 13th and continues several days) the cultivators spread manure over their fields in preparation for the coming planting season. The manure is obtained from the Indian dairy farmers of the village in exchange for paddy stalk.

The daily work schedule of U Myaing while he was working as a fish processor (2 months in a year) was as follows:- 512 461 264

He rose at four or five in the morning said his prayers, drank plain tea, had boiled beans, fried fish and rice left over from the previous day's evening meal. After that he went to collect fish, bring it to the bank and start work on it. He rested from 11 o'clock to 2 o'clock. At two he resumed work till about five when he would be finished for the day. Sometimes he would sleep at the work place after returning home for his evening meal.

Work in the Refugee Camp.

Shortly after arriving at the Camp U Myaing worked in Sulian Park near the Kokine market where a factory for spinning and weaving cloth was being set up. The contractor was Chinese, and he engaged between 30 to 35 labourers every day. These labourers were unskilled and they were employed in levelling the ground and laying the foundation of the factory. Most of the labourers were Indians - there being only two Burmans, U Myaing and Ma Aye Myaing got Rs. 2/-. The working hours stretched from eight in the morning to 12 noon, with a break of one hour at 12. At one o'clock they resumed work and continued until five in the evening. In the mornings they had to go to the factory by themselves, and this took them about a half hour walk. Sometimes they were sent home in a truck in the evenings. U Myaing had to enquire each day at various places for a chance to work. He was not always successful. 722 461 464 331

It was not usual for Ma Aye Myaing to come along like this to work as a labourer. This was the first time she did so. Ma Aye Myaing said that in future she would accompany U Myaing whenever there are prospects of such work. They knew that women worked in this way, but had not known that such work was available. [562]

As a matter of fact, I met U Myaing through the mats which were made in his camp. We got dinner place mats through him. These are rectangular 1½ feet by 2 feet mats of finely-woven split cane in an over 2 - under 2 pattern. They cost Rs. 2/8 each. U Myaing arranged for the making of these mats and collected the money for them, but 285 437.

285 they make made by friends. Ma Aye Myaing and Daw Aw Zar appear to
437 specialize in the larger mats such as used for sleeping. Mat making appears to be an occupation which in ordinary times is unimportant but it is relied heavily upon in bad times.

461 The children are put to work around the house and in processing
562 the fish at an early age. Just recently U Myaing's eldest daughter
561 left school to learn a trade. She left one month ago from the fourth
[277] standard, to learn cheroot rolling. In another month's time she will
874 have learnt how. She does not have to pay any fees - neither is she
[294] paid for her help. She lives with her aunt (U Myaing's sister) and has her meals there. Near their house there is also an embroidery shop which is owned by her aunt. At night U Myaing's daughter is taught embroidery and sewing by her aunt. The owner of the cheroot rolling shop is not a relative, but the women who work there are aunts and grand-aunts of the girl. When she has learnt the trade, then she will be paid between two and three rupees a day on piece work basis.

463 At present (May 1951) U Myaing is working as a sweeper in the
363 Rangoon Municipality on a monthly wage of Rs. 80/-. There is an over-
512 seer placed over him every day. U Myaing's main job is to keep one street in town clean. He leaves his house at six and arrives at the overseer's by half past six and there a roll-call is taken of about a hundred of them. At seven he begins on his street and stops at about half-eight to go to answer the roll-call (see below for rest of schedule). He has personal contact only with the overseer, the doctor and the WUNDAUK (official). All three of them go around the town to see if they work hard enough. The WUNDAUK also comes everyday to witness the roll-call. "If we do not do good work we shall be dismissed. Everything is in their hands. But they do so after two or three warnings. We do not possess any rights at all. Sometimes offenders are sent to other streets that require harder labour."

U Myaing's street is located in Myeni-gon, and he has to clean the street of dirt as well as clean the drains on either side.

His daily schedule at present is as follows: He rises at 4, washes his face and cleans his teeth, says his prayers and then has plain tea which Ma Aye Myaing has prepared for him. At six he leaves

25; Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

166. VILLAGE CHEVAUX-DE-FRISE.

away from the company. In a similar spirit of courtesy a rider dismounts and umbrellas are closed. Among acts of discourtesy few are accounted so grave by the Burmans as that of awakening a sleeper. The reluctance to disturb a sleeper is connected with the belief that the spirit (*laipkya*) leaves the body during sleep (p. 197). It is looked upon as a weakness to show resentment and temper (*dawtha*, p. 44). A visitor in a house is offered a new mat to sit upon, water to drink, betel to chew, and a spittoon. If it be meal-time he is invited to partake; otherwise he is asked if he has had food, and refreshment is brought. Although the quota of leisure that falls to everyone is greater in Burma than anywhere else, owing to the wide-spread prosperity of the inhabitants, there is perhaps no country in which every man, woman, and child is less exempt from business concern. Thus it happens that after a few commonplaces, conversation inevitably gravitates to business—prices, harvests, prospects. Next in interest come the festival programmes, the local celebrities and their doings. In every house there are scales and weights, and the household is engaged in occasional or regular trade. Accounts in money and kind are current between neighbours. Whatever spare produce remains is exposed for sale.

The villages either have a quick fence of impenetrable thorny bamboo (*myinwa*), or a hedge of cactus and briar or bamboo *chevaux-de-frise*. In some parts they are open. The old towns (*myó*) had ramparts and stockades (Nos. 6, 371, 387). The highest sites about the village are for the *nat*, the *Payá-aye* or sacred ground, the next best are for the *kyaung*. Then comes the enclosure of

167. APPROACH TO THE VILLAGE.